

Wadleigh Memorial Library



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~ 2013 DIRECTOR'S REPORT ~

As we began 2013, the Library hired a professional library consultant to help lead us through a process resulting in an in-depth strategic plan. A focus group of approximately a dozen community members met several times to discuss key components of the town's—and the library's—current strengths, opportunities for growth, aspirations for the future, and desired outcomes. The library staff also went through an abbreviated form of the same process. The results of these meetings provided the framework for the Library's first strategic plan as well as vision statements and a new mission statement.

Mission Statement: The Wadleigh Memorial Library is the educational, cultural, technological and social center supporting lifelong learning and improving quality of life by connecting the community to resources and services.

Vision Statements: The Library will be...

- A place which is accessible to all, welcoming, visually stimulating, transformative, and comfortable and showcases the vibrant sense of community.
- A place for community members to gather; to learn; to socialize — a literal and figurative center for the community.
- An institution that supports and partners with the town, community organizations, non-profits and small businesses.
- A community resource that is not defined by its four walls but performs outreach and brings diverse groups of people together through common goals and interests.

Our new plan, along with its carefully chosen goals and objectives, will help better guide our focus and efforts in the next few years. In the meantime, however, what follows are highlights from the past year:

Collection & Services

Two years ago we noticed the number of items checked out over the course of the year began to stabilize; the trend persisted this year with only a 1% overall change in total circulation from the previous year. Despite this, we continue to have the second highest circulation per capita in the state and more than double the national average of libraries in our population category.

Although total circulation has remained flat, we saw increases in three areas:

- Downloadable audiobook use increased by 7.6%. With a respectable 2500 downloads, use accounted for only 1% of overall checkouts.
- E-book checkouts increased by a whopping 76% in the past year. This was aided by the purchase of a second platform of titles available only to GMILCS library consortium members. Our other platform via the NH State Library puts our library patrons in competition with patrons from nearly every other library in the state when it comes to waiting for titles. Even with such a sharp increase, e-book checkouts still only account for 2% of total circulation.
- DVD use saw a slight increase of 2.4% but the number of checkouts continued to be nearly as high as adult books. DVD checkouts made up 23% of overall circulation.
- The number of reference questions posed to our staff rose again this year with an average of more than 15,000 requests for information. We gave all sorts of assistance to patrons needing help with their e-readers and devices; software troubleshooting; how to write a resume; finding product reviews; creating websites; and homework and research help. Patrons also performed more than 160,000 searches for books and materials on our online public catalog.
- Subscription database searches also increased modestly with approximately 20,500 queries. Our databases cover a number of topics including genealogy, language learning, auto repair, investments, business and corporation data, and practice tests for civil service and professional education exams.



Programs

Nearly 14,000 people participated in one or more of the 600+ programs hosted by the Library during the course of 2013.

The Reference Department planned a vast array of programs for adults including "Hiking the Appalachian Trail," "Black Bear Behavior" presented by biologist and author Ben Kilham; "Find Your Way Around the Healthcare Law" led by AARP; and "A Walk Back in Time: The Secrets of Cellar Holes," a NH Humanities Council program. In addition, a small group of committed volunteers continued to plan and run the Acoustic Café series as well as a weekly Spanish language conversation group and a biweekly knitting group. Our two adult book groups remained popular as did our Adult Summer Reading program, "Groundbreaking Reads." The grown-ups were just as thrilled to win Summer Reading

prizes as their pint-sized and teen counterparts. **Overall, adult program attendance increased sharply by nearly 20%.**

Our Young Adult Services Librarian planned and implemented more than 80 programs throughout the year with a **10% increase in attendance.** Among those programs are

various groups and clubs who meet on a monthly basis. The Doctor Who Fan Club went into overdrive in celebrating the series' 50th anniversary by making a life-sized replica of the show's iconic "TARDIS" (seen in the adjacent photo, background). The Anime and Pizza & Pages Book Clubs remained popular as did



the monthly teen gaming/Wii Wednesdays. The Summer Reading Theme of "Beneath the Surface" resulted in fun craft programs as well as Jurassic themed and Shark Attack parties. Summer Reading participants were entered in raffle drawings for themed baskets of swag; the more books they read, the more entries they received.



The Children's Department also went into high gear in celebrating Summer Reading with their theme of "Dig in to Reading." In addition to prizes and raffle drawings, entries of which were based on the amount of time children spent reading, participants enjoyed a number of programs including an Archaeology Adventure, a Dinosaur Dig and a Gardening Party. Summer story times at Keyes Field remained popular as did our "Mad Science" and "Art Afternoon" program series; book groups; Lego parties; and our

"Paws to Read" series where children work on their reading skills by reading aloud to certified therapy dogs. We also partnered with Milford Middle School's art classes to feature an ongoing, rotating display of selected student artwork.

Our Summer Reading Program was made possible by a generous grant from the Wadleigh Library Development Fund. We thank them for their continued support!

Facilities & Grounds

Looking towards our impending building project, we had the opportunity to purchase an adjacent property. Using trust fund monies, in November, papers were signed to acquire 29 Nashua Street. In addition to squaring off our lot, once demolished along with the “Library Annex” next door the lots will provide additional, badly needed parking.

The building project itself continued to move forward. After meeting regularly with the town’s Community Facilities Committee, the decision was made to issue a Request for Proposals. From 11 respondents, the Library selected Lavalée Brensinger Architects to reassess our facility and needs and present a design and cost analysis for the renovation and expansion of the library. We look forward to building momentum and support for this exciting—and badly needed—project.

Once again, our community meetings rooms were very heavily utilized with nearly 600 bookings. As we have no group study rooms for tutoring, group projects, or individual quiet study, we allow our meeting rooms to be used as such if they are not reserved for group meetings or library programs. Since we receive daily requests for quiet study spaces, in 2012 we began tracking them to get a better idea of the perceived need in town for such spaces. Of the near 600 times our rooms were used by community members in 2013, approximately half were requests for quiet spaces to meet or study. This is a 50% increase over the previous year and demonstrates a clear need for quiet spaces in which individuals or small groups may study or work.

The Keyes Room, our largest meeting room, has a fire code capacity of 40 people. Because attendance at a large number of our adult programs often exceeds that number, we must also usually reserve the adjacent conference room (capacity of 8-10). This, of course, limits the available rooms for community groups to meet. It’s not uncommon for some of our adult programs to have standing room only. Indeed for our Acoustic Café series and a few of our larger programs where we anticipate less than 100 people, we must clear the Children’s Room of all furniture and set up staging, seating and lighting. For larger children’s programs where the anticipated attendance is over 100, we must hold them off-site, defeating the purpose of drawing people into the library.

Our Children’s and Young Adult departments continue to receive heavy use. A few years ago the size of the Young Adult collection began exceeding the available space. Our Facilities Manager created shelving and the collection began spilling out and around the



corner. We recently relocated two of the four pc workstations in that area in order to reach blocked shelves. We also added even more shelving around the corner. Nearly as soon as these changes were made, the shelving was full (see photo, left). There is no more available space in which to create additional shelving. There is no space for seating other than at two computer stations. The room is small enough that

it becomes uncomfortably crowded when more than 6-7 teens are browsing the shelves.

The Children's Department has long since outgrown its space. Approximately a third of its collection spills outside the department and into the adult section of the library. Many Children's programs must be held on the next floor in order to contain mess, noise, and of course children! Program supplies are stored in various locations throughout the building. While we have long been aware of the shortage of parking, the lack of sufficient handicapped parking in particular was vocalized by many concerned residents this year. Depending on funding, we hope to address the situation in the coming year.

For the second year in a row, we have been unable to turn on the beautiful, historic fountain which graces the side of our building. Formally known as the "Soldiers' Light & Fountain," it was dedicated in 1894, with much pomp and circumstance, by Dr. Mary Lull to honor and memorialize Milford's Civil War veterans. Those veterans included her own husband, Colonel Oliver Lull, who at age 37, died in the war. One of the town's two Civil War memorials, the fountain has deteriorated to such an extent that it needs extensive plumbing and conservation work. We consulted with the NH Preservation Alliance and contracted with a professional conservator for an assessment. The cost to fix and preserve the fountain is not insubstantial. We hope to address its needs as soon as possible but once more; the work is dependent on funding.



During the course of 2013, we purchased a new, much larger book return with separate bins to accommodate both print and audiovisual resources. Prior to this, when returning AV materials after hours, patrons had to walk to the front of the building to deposit them in an old mail slot type return (to do otherwise nearly always resulted in discs being crushed or cracked by the weight of heavy books). We also repaved the walkway from the back parking lot to the entrance and installed a new phone system, joining us with the rest of the town's telephone network.

In June we dedicated a beautiful new flagpole and monument, purchased in large part with donations in memory of former Milford resident, Library Page and soldier, Jared Aaron Davison. Jared died inexplicably and tragically at the age of 24 while stationed in Virginia. More than 50 people gathered on a bright, sunny day for the dedication of a fitting memorial for such a special young man.



Summary/Conclusion

2013 was a very busy year and one in which we made great strides in planning for the Library's future. We've been quite fortunate to be in a community whose residents not only take advantage of everything their library has to offer, but who also support the library and its mission. On behalf of the staff, thank you for that continued support.

Respectfully Submitted, *Michelle R. Sampson*, Library Director

2013 Wadleigh Memorial Library Statistics

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| | | | |
| Registered Patrons | 12,596 | PC logons (inc. partial year wireless access) | 18,314 |
| Patron visits to library* | 136,431 | Online catalog searches (new stat) | 160,973 |
| Volunteer hours | 313 | Database searches | 20,466 |
| | | Reference Questions Asked | 15,548 |
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| 2013 Circulation Statistics | | Library Holdings as of 12/31/13 | |
| Adult Books | 57,265 | Adult Books | 39,557 |
| YA Books | 12,413 | Young Adult Books | 4,535 |
| Children's Books | 63,948 | Juvenile Books | 19,412 |
| Periodicals | 4,347 | Reference Books | 4,446 |
| Audiobooks | 9,382 | Magazine & Newspaper Subscriptions | 178 |
| Downloadable audio | 2,510 | Back Issues | 5543 |
| E-books | 4,945 | Total Books & Periodicals | 73,671 |
| Videos | 55,785 | Music CDs | 2,887 |
| Music CDs | 7,629 | Audiobooks | 2,737 |
| Museum Passes | 525 | DVDs | 5,810 |
| Other | 95 | Misc/Other | 15 |
| Items from GMILCS library network (all formats) | 24,197 | Microfilm (18 Titles) | 198 |
| ILL-Loaned from outside network (all formats) | 1,023 | Total AV Materials | 11,647 |
| TOTAL CIRCULATION | 244,064 | Items added | 9,153 |
| | | Items withdrawn | 8,252 |
| | | TOTAL HOLDINGS | 85,318 |
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| Library Program Events | | Community Room Reservations | |
| Adult | 233 | Adult | 463 |
| Young Adult | 81 | Young Adult | 91 |
| Children | 250 | Children | 33 |
| Offsite Outreach | 49 | Total Reservations | 587 |
| All Ages | 11 | | |
| Total Events | 624 | Community Room Attendance | |
| | | Adult | 1743 |
| Library Program Attendance | | Young Adult | 277 |
| Adult/Unclassified | 2351 | Children | 301 |
| Young Adult | 639 | Total Attendance | 2,321 |
| Children | 5109 | | |
| Offsite Outreach | 5006 | | |
| All Ages | 632 | | |
| Total Participation | 13,737 | | |
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